

4-H Program of Distinction

Category: Partnership and Grants

Title: 4-H Adventures in Russia

Rationale: “Relations with the United States are one of the priorities of Russia’s foreign policy, seen as an important factor of international stability. The principal objective is to ensure their stable, constructive and predictable development in all aspects, to enhance area of correlating interests and to narrow down the areas of disputes through compromise and respect for mutual interests. Russia and the United States look into the future of their relations with optimism and confidence, they actively cooperate in seeking new directions of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two nations.” Embassy of the Russian Federation

Description and Design: 4-H offered four 1-hour, age-appropriate lessons per day during a two-week overnight camp hosted by an English Education agency in Moscow, Russia, who recruited Russian youth, secured the facility, provided transportation, funded VISA expenses and excursions. Using the hands on experiential learning model, Russian youth ages 7-15 were exposed to the six pillars of good character, democratic processes of decision-making, USDA’s food pyramid, conflict resolution, drug/alcohol refusal skills, leadership, the 4 H’s of 4-H, holidays celebrated in the US, and other various cooperative team building sessions. The goals of the program include:

- To provide opportunities for Russian youth to work cooperatively using the experiential learning model
- To establish a 4-H presence in Russia
- To improve the English speaking skills of Russian youth
- To foster leadership and personal development skills in Russian youth
- To introduce Russian youth to the American culture

The following are brief descriptions of the classes taught, target age, the frequency, and length of the classes.

Introduction to 4-H in the American Culture and Character Development a one-hour lesson for Russian youth ages 7 -11 to introduce the 4-H’s with an emphasis on positive character traits, and how 4-H works with youth in America

Introduction to 4-H in the American Culture and Team Building a one-hour lesson for Russian youth ages 12-14 to introduce the 4-H’s, team building, and how 4-H works with youth in America

Developing Trusting Relationships a one-hour lesson for youth ages 7-14 to develop and enhance the positive character trait of trust

Developing a Caring Character in Teens, a one-hour character education lesson focusing on the character trait of *caring* for youth ages 12-14

Developing a Caring Character, three one-hour character education lessons focusing on the character trait of *caring* for youth ages 7-11

Mother’s Day in the USA three one-hour lessons on developing and expressing emotions in English around the holiday of Mother’s Day for Russian youth ages 7-11

Dieting Wisely as a Teen Using the Food Pyramid a one-hour lesson on healthy dieting and life changes for teens ages 12-14 using the Food Pyramid

Healthy Eating with the Food Pyramid Three one-hour lessons on healthy eating for youth ages 7-11 using the Food Pyramid

Resisting Negative Peer Pressure a one-hour experiential education lesson on negative peer pressure and the effects of drugs and alcohol on the brain for teens 12-14\

Trust Building and Cooperative Games

- a one-hour lesson for youth ages 7-11 using experiential education to build on established basic concepts
- a two-hour lesson for youth ages 7-9 using experiential education to introduce and reinforce concepts of building trust

Resolving Differences Democratically Eight one-hour lessons on the methods of using a democratic model for resolving conflicts peacefully and respectfully through the creation of a 4-H banner to represent their Russian 4-H Club for youth ages 7-14

Goal Setting with Teens one 1.5-hour lesson for youth ages 12-14 on the importance of setting goals in life and the consequences for not setting them

Team Building and English, three one-hour experiential education lessons on team building and developing skills in English for Russian youth

Developing Self-Esteem through Positive Reinforcement four one-hour lessons on building self-esteem in youth ages 7-14 using experiential education

Targeted Audience: Russian youth ages 7-15 from the City of Moscow, Capital of the former Soviet Union/Russian Federation.

Outcomes and Impacts: Immediate outcomes of the program are:

91% of teens and 75% of youth stated that they would change their eating habits after learning about healthy eating using the food pyramid.

82% of all youth planned to share what they learned from the Resolving Differences Democratically Session.

75% of youth stated they would change the way they think, act or feel after participating in the cooperative trust session.

89% of teens participating in the Goal Setting workshop stated they planned to use or share what they learned.

92% of teens stated that the information given at the Resisting Negative Peer Pressure Session was useful and 75% said they planned to use or share what they learned.

81% of Russian youth are more interested in learning about American culture.

Long-term outcomes:

Because staff of the hosting agency have not seen the experiential learning model that 4-H offers, agency Administrators requested more information about the 4-H program. The agency became a member of the Association of Experiential Education attending the International AEE Conference in Norfolk, VA in 2004. They want 4-H professionals to

return to Russia for more programs and to train their educators in the 4-H 101 curriculum. Additionally they want to promote an international exchange with American 4-H members in the future.

Evaluation: The program evaluation was a self-assessment questionnaire developed by Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Designed for older youth audiences, it was translated into Russian to increase youth's understanding of questions and concepts asked.

Suggestions for Replication or Program in Other Settings: Because the program design focus' on the American culture, 4-H, conflict resolution, character education and healthy lifestyles, this model can be replicated with other international opportunities around the world with minimal adaptations necessary to accommodate local cultures. The model would also work for populations within the US (minus the American culture focus) who are not familiar with the 4-H program. In addition, to further the work begun in the Russian Federation, an international exchange opportunity would build on the relationships forged in 2003.

Sources of Funding

\$3,200.00 – Mr. English Tour Club Summer Camp in Russia

\$ 680.00 – Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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